

Chugachmiut

January 18, 2012

Senator Donald Olson
Alaska State Capitol Room 508
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Senator Olson:

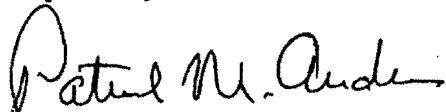
Chugachmiut appreciates your introduction of SB 130 for the purpose of establishing an Alaska Native Language and Advisory Council within the State of Alaska. We fully support the bill and encourage the legislature to adopt it this year.

As I reflect on the Suqiaq language spoken in our area, and how close it came to extinction, I am comforted that federal language grants have given us an opportunity to preserve it and teach a new generation of speakers. Yet we are losing our teachers at a very rapid rate. One of our few Elder speakers passed away recently and we feel the loss deeply. We relied extensively on him to help guide our language restoration efforts.

Our tribes are clear and focused on preservation of Suqiaq and teaching our youth. Nanwalek has struggled for years to support an immersion school. We are now finding some acceptance for language instruction in our public schools. Chugachmiut has collaborated with the 2 school districts with schools in our villages over the past 2 years and we hope to see more in the future.

An Alaska Native Language and Advisory Council as proposed in your bill would be extremely beneficial to our language preservation effort. Please let us know what we can do to support it.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Patrick M. Anderson".

Patrick M. Anderson
Executive Director

